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JONATHAN SWIFT

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

格列佛游记



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JONATHAN SWIFT

Gulliver's Travels

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PAUL TURNER

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经验证明,阅读译本看似省力,实际常有雾里看花之憾;钻研原著,起初不免吃力,但是唯有如此,才能识得庐山真面目。文学作品是这样,一般语文参考书也是这样。从研究外国文化的目标着想,必须立志精通外语;从学习外语的方法着眼,应当早读多读原文著

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学生英语文库第一辑和第二辑约 20 种,定于近期陆续和读者见面。以后还将逐步扩充选目。我们希望这个小小文库能成为我国广大英语学习者的良师益友。

本书内容介绍

本书是英国著名作家乔纳森·斯威夫特(Jonathan Swift 1667—1745)所作,以寓言形式对时政、世道、人性进行了无情的讽刺。因其神奇怪诞而为儿童所喜爱,因其辛辣深刻而为成人所耽读。游记叙述船医格列佛几次因航海出事而流落海外四国的见闻。小人国:该国居民身高不过六英寸,君臣贪残,政党倾轧,教派纷争,战祸连绵。所有争端都是一些可笑的琐事细故。大人国:格列佛到了这里成了小人国人,被人当作掌上玩物。他在国王面前夸赞英国的政制、财力、军威和历史,但是在国王诘问之下却暴露了它的全部丑恶。飞岛国:这里的学者们不务实际,专事从黄瓜中提取阳光之类的妄举。慧马国:该国君民是具有理性的马,而充当奴隶的则是一种称为 yahoo 的人形而兽性的动物。

作者小传

斯威夫特(Jonathan Swift 1667—1745)是英国 18 世纪杰出的政论家和讽刺小说家。他出生于爱尔兰都柏林的一个贫苦家庭,为遗腹子,自幼由叔父收养。14 岁入都柏林三一学院,获学士学位。后于 1692 年获牛津大学硕士学位,1701 年获三一学院神学博士学位。1688 年,斯威夫特前往英国,投奔远亲 W·邓波尔爵士门下任私人秘书,直到 1699 年邓波尔逝世。此十年中,他写过一些诗和文章,但使他扬名的是他的讽刺散文《一只澡盆的故事》(1704),讽刺了宗教和学术界的腐败、愚腐现象,尖锐泼辣,才华横溢。起初,他按辉格党的原则就爱尔兰和英国的政事发表评论,受到广大读者的注意。但他反对辉格党政府支持非英国国教的政策,因此与之分裂。1710 年 9 月托利党获胜组阁,斯威夫特任该党刊物《考察者》主编。此时,英国和法国为了争夺西班牙王位继承权而进行的长期战争(1701—1713)给英国人民带来了深重苦难。他写文章反对这场战争,最轰动的一篇叫《同盟国和前任内阁发动和进行这次战争的行为》。在此舆论的压力下,1713 年,英法停战,签订和约。故此有人把这个和约称为“斯威夫特和约”。1713 年他被安妮女王任命为都柏林圣帕特里克大教堂主持牧师。1714 年女王逝世和托利党政府垮台,斯威夫特结束了在英国的政治生活,返回爱尔兰,继续著书立说。此后,他的作品有:《布商的信》(1724—1726),抨击英国政府对爱尔兰的货币政策。《一个小小的建议》摹拟统治者谋士的口吻,以忧国忧民的姿态提议把穷人的孩子杀了供富人食用,以缓和经济状况,讽刺极为辛辣。他最伟大的讽刺

作品是寓言小说《格列佛游记》(1726)。它通过假想的大人国、小人国等讽刺时政,抨击资本主义社会。为此赢得了爱尔兰人民的尊敬。

斯威夫特晚年不幸,1742年大病后瘫痪。1745年4月19日去世,葬于圣帕特里克大教堂。

INTRODUCTION

I

Gulliver's Travels is not one of those books which 'the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again'.¹ It was a bestseller when it first came out in 1726, and people have been reading it for pleasure, not merely for profit, ever since. George Orwell read it first just before he was eight, re-read it at least half a dozen times during his short life, and found it 'impossible to grow tired of'. 'If I were to make a list', he wrote, 'of six books which were to be preserved when all others were destroyed, I would certainly put *Gulliver's Travels* among them.'²

One thing that makes the book rather hard to lay down is the excitement of the story. Only the flying island episode is real science fiction, but throughout the narrative Swift uses the science-fiction technique of describing fantastic events with so much circumstantial detail that they seem perfectly credible. Thus the reader becomes seriously involved in Gulliver's unlikely adventures. Will he, for instance, manage to bring off his one-man commando-raid on the Blefuscudian fleet—or will he stagger back blinded by a hail of arrows? It is quite a tense moment; but in the nick of time the resourceful hero puts on his spectacles, and we all breathe a sigh of relief.

Another obvious attraction of *Gulliver's Travels* is its humour, which is often far more hilarious than one would expect from an author of nearly sixty. As Swift's friend Arbuthnot put it, 'Gulliver is a happy man that at his age can write such a merry work'.³ Some of the jokes were too broad for Victorian taste, and as late as 1915 the Clarendon Press editor felt it necessary to omit them; but the modern reader is likely to find their Rabelaisian character quite congenial. Equally in line with modern trends is the occasional

violence of the satire. Thackeray described Part IV as 'filthy in word, filthy in thought, furious, raging, obscene',⁴ and Edmund Gosse thought that 'the horrible foulness of this satire on the Yahoos . . . banishes from decent households a fourth part'⁵ of the book; but nowadays most people would agree that shock-tactics are a legitimate element in satiric technique, and that Swift's 'horrible foulness' is usually justified by his moral purpose.

The story, then, the humour, and the satire have as much appeal for our period as they had for the eighteenth century; and certain passages may have even more. The space-age reader should find a special interest in that artificial satellite, the Island of Laputa; and all the moral issues raised by nuclear weapons are implied in Gulliver's offer to the King of Brobdingnag of enough destructive power to 'destroy the whole Metropolis, if ever it should pretend to dispute his absolute Commands'. The thinking-machine devised by the Professor at Lagado is clearly a prototype of the computer; and one of his colleagues is equally up to date in proposing a system of reciprocal brain-transplants between political party-leaders. George Orwell saw the Houyhnhnm community as a totalitarian state, with the Yahoos playing the role of the Jews in Nazi Germany, and found in Part III 'an extraordinarily clear prevision of the spy-haunted "police state", with its endless heresy-hunts and treason-trials'.⁶ Finally the episode of the Struldbrugs poses a major problem which was not at all urgent in Swift's day, but, thanks to modern medicine, is becoming increasingly urgent in ours: the problem whether it is right to prolong life after the capacity to enjoy life has gone.

In these and similar passages *Gulliver's Travels* may well be said to have more topical interest today than when it was originally published.

II

The first hint for writing the book probably came from

the Scriblerus Club, a group of friends who got together in 1713 with a plan to satirize every form of idiocy displayed by intellectuals, in the person of an imaginary pedant and 'scribbler', Martinus Scriblerus. The Club consisted of Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, Parnell and the Earl of Oxford, and the idea was to ridicule the published works of their victims (e.g. Bentley's edition of Milton) by claiming that Scriblerus wrote them, and also to publish new satires (e.g. the *Peri Bathous*, 1728) under the name of Scriblerus. But the main project was to publish a biography of their hero, which finally came out in 1741, as *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*.

In Chapter xvi of the *Memoirs* the travels of Martinus are briefly summarized in such terms as to identify them with the travels of Gulliver. This chapter was probably written between 1727 and 1729; but the idea of sending Scriblerus off on a series of imaginary journeys seems to have formed part of the Club's original plan, and Swift, who had always been fond of reading travel-books, was apparently given the job of writing this one. The question is how much actually got written about Martinus's travels, and what relation they bear to *Gulliver's Travels*.

According to a statement by Pope in about 1728, 'It was from a part of these memoirs that Dr. Swift took his first hints for Gulliver. There were pygmies in Schreiber's travels and the projects of Laputa'.⁶ On the strength of this it has been suggested that 'A Voyage to Lilliput' and 'A Voyage to Laputa' incorporate material written perhaps as early as 1714 for the travels of Scriblerus; but there is no conclusive evidence to support such a theory, and Pope's words appear to mean only that the basic conception of Lilliput and of Laputa was suggested by Club discussions of the Scriblerus biography.

It is fairly clear from Swift's correspondence that the real composition of *Gulliver's Travels* began around the end of 1720, and was finished in the autumn of 1725. Parts I and II were mainly written in 1721-2, Part IV in 1723, and Part III in 1724-5.

When he started writing this 'merry work', he had no reason

to feel particularly merry. He had failed to obtain any ~~Church~~ preferment in England, and had been forced to accept a mere Deanery in Ireland, a country which he disliked. The Tory government for which he had worked had fallen, and his friends Oxford and Bolingbroke had been impeached by the Whigs. He was suffering from a chronic disease, Ménière's Syndrome, which caused deafness and increasingly severe fits of giddiness. To the sense of living in exile, cut off from his friends, was added in 1721 the news that one of his best friends, Matthew Prior, was dead; and in 1724 his ill health was intensified by 'a cruel Disorder that kept me in Torture for a Week . . . the Learned call it the Haemorrhoides internae which with the attendance of Strangury, loss of Blood, water-gruel and no sleep require more of the Stoick than I am Master of, to support it.'

He faced these troubles, however, with a more cheerful philosophy than Stoicism: 'I give all possible way to Amusements, because they preserve my Temper as Exercise does my Health, and without Health and good humor I had rather be a dog.'¹⁰ 'When you are melancholy, read diverting or amusing books; it is my Receipt, and seldom fails.'¹¹ 'I always expect tomorrow will be worse, but I enjoy to-day as well as I can. This is my philosophy . . .'¹² The rich comedy of *Gulliver's Travels* is doubtless a by-product of this courageous determination to keep his spirits up, whatever happened; and while he was writing the book, his spirits must have soared spontaneously, when he scored a resounding victory over Walpole and the Whig government, in the matter of 'Wood's half-pence'. Wood had been given a patent to supply copper coins to Ireland, on a scale that would have seriously damaged the Irish economy. Swift rallied Irish resistance to the scheme in his anonymous *Drapier's Letters* (1724), which were so effective that Walpole was finally forced to recall Wood's patent, and 'the Drapier' became a national hero. The extent of his triumph is indicated by the story that when Walpole, several years later, issued an order for Swift's arrest, he was told that an army of at least ten thousand men would

be needed to arrest the Dean of Ireland.¹³

This political success must have greatly increased Swift's confidence in the power of his pen, and his determination to publish *Gulliver's Travels*; but the problem was first how to find a publisher prepared to risk publishing a transparently anti-Whig satire, and secondly how to avoid prosecution himself. To solve these problems he now made a trip to England, taking his manuscript with him, and arrived in London by the middle of March, 1726. He spent most of the next few months staying with Pope at Twickenham, and seeing other old friends of the Scriblerus Club. No doubt he showed them his manuscript, and they discussed plans for publishing it; perhaps he had it transcribed, so that his handwriting could not be used as evidence against him.

Finally, in August, secret negotiations were started with a London printer and bookseller called Benjamin Motte. 'Motte receiv'd the copy (he tells me)' wrote Pope to Swift later, 'he knew not from whence, nor from whom, dropp'd at his house in the dark, from a Hackney-coach: by computing the time, I found it was after you left England, so for my part, I suspend judgment'.¹⁴ The 'copy' was part of the manuscript of *Gulliver's Travels*, accompanied by a letter, evidently composed by Swift, but written in what looks like Gay's hand,¹⁵ and signed by Gulliver's imaginary cousin, Richard Sympson. The letter asked Motte if he would publish the book, for a fee of £200 to the author (i.e. Gulliver), who 'intends the profit for the use of poor Sea-men'.¹⁶ Motte evidently recognized the market-value of the work—he may even have guessed who wrote it, since Motte was the business successor of Swift's old friend and publisher, Benjamin Tooke—and he agreed to publish within a month of receiving the complete manuscript (though not to pay the £200 quite so soon). The book came out on October 28th, 1726.

By this time Swift was back in Ireland. He had not been able to correct the proofs himself, and when he saw a published copy he found that Motte had not only allowed a large number of misprints to stand, but had deliberately

altered the text of several passages,¹⁷ cutting out or toning down the satire which he thought too dangerously outspoken. Swift was naturally annoyed that his work should be 'mangled and murdered'¹⁸ in this way, and, presumably at his request, his friend Charles Ford wrote to Motte pointing out the misprints and protesting at the alterations.¹⁹ Motte corrected most of the misprints in his next edition, but the prudential changes in the text were retained until 1735, when *Gulliver's Travels* was reprinted in Dublin by George Faulkner, as volume iii of *Swift's Works*.

Scholars have disagreed about the reliability of Faulkner's text; but the evidence seems to suggest that this edition was published with Swift's permission and under his general supervision, and that its text, which incorporates most of the *corrigenda* noted by Ford in Motte's first edition, is the nearest we can get to Swift's original manuscript, and to his final intentions for the book.²⁰ The text printed here, prepared by Herbert Davis, is based on Faulkner's 1735 edition.

Whatever the faults of his text, Motte's 1726 edition was an enormous success. The first impression sold out in a week; within three weeks ten thousand copies had been sold, and within two years the book had been translated twice into French, once into Dutch, and once into German. On November 17 Gay wrote to Swift:

About ten days ago a Book was publish'd here of the Travels of one Gulliver, which hath been the conversation of the whole town ever since . . . nothing is more diverting than to hear the different opinions people give of it, though all agree in liking it extreamly. 'Tis generally said that you are the Author, but I am told, the Bookseller declares he knows not from what hand it came. From the highest to the lowest it is universally read, from the Cabinet-council to the Nursery.²¹

Swift's friends shared in his triumph: for a while his correspondence was full of joking allusions to the book, and to the

fiction that Swift had nothing to do with it. One such letter from Mrs. Howard provoked the reply:

Madam.

When I received your Letter I thought it the most unaccountable one I ever saw in my Life, and was not able to comprehend three words of it together. The Perverseness of your Lines astonished me, which tended downwards to the right on one Page, and upward in the two others. This I thought impossible to be done by any Person who did not squint with both Eyes; an Infirmary I never observed in you. However, one thing I was pleased with, that after you had writ me *down*, you repented, and writ me *up*. But I continued four days at a loss for your meaning, till a Bookseller sent me the Travells of one Captⁿ Gulliver, who proved a very good Explainer, although at the same time, I thought it hard to be forced to read a Book of seven hundred Pages in order to understand a Letter of fifty lines . . .²³

He was evidently in very good spirits—even when, several weeks later, one of his ‘Houyhnhnms’ bit his little finger.²⁴

III

Gulliver's Travels starts like a novel, and in relating the adventures of a realistically-conceived central character it obviously resembles the novels of Defoe, especially *Robinson Crusoe*, published seven years before. The adventures, however, soon become too fantastic for a novel, and the characterization of Gulliver is not always of central importance.

A closer definition would be to call the book a parody of a traveller's tale. This ancient genre goes back to Lucian's *True History* (2nd century A.D.), a riotous take-off of the travellers' tales current in classical times. Lucian goes off on a voyage of discovery across the Atlantic, and has a series of humorously incredible experiences (such as being blown up to the moon,

and living for nearly two years inside a whale). That is the basic pattern of *Gulliver's Travels*, which borrows several details from Lucian;²⁴ but Swift is more concerned to parody the genuine travellers' tales of his own period, particularly those of the pirate and explorer, William Dampier.

The mock-traveller's tale had been adapted by Sir Thomas More to serve as an introduction to his *Utopia* (1516), and *Gulliver's Travels* has clear connections with the Utopian romance. Chapter vi of Part I, for instance, describes Lilliputian arrangements in Utopian terms, and the whole account of the Houyhnhnms seems to oscillate between a Utopia and a mock-Utopia.

Since More, several works had been written in the Lucianic genre, notably by Rabelais and Cyrano de Bergerac. The fourth and fifth books of Rabelais, written about 1547, describe the travels of Panurge and Pantagruel in search of the Oracle of the Bottle. On their way they visit various fantastic countries which allegorically satirize contemporary clerics, politicians, and academics. Swift uses a rather similar technique, and in particular his mockery of scientists in Laputa and Lagado corresponds with that of Rabelais in the Kingdom of Entelechy.²⁵

In his *Histoire Comique de la Lune* (1657) Cyrano visits the moon, and finds it inhabited by giants. Like Gulliver in Brobdingnag, Cyrano is put on show as a freak, thrown into the company of a dwarf—who turns out to be the astronaut-hero of Bishop Godwin's *The Man in the Moon* (1638)—and becomes emotionally involved with a young giantess.

In using the Lucianic mock-traveller's tale, then, as a vehicle for Utopian speculation and contemporary satire, Swift was doing nothing new. What made his book unique was the complexity of its texture. *Gulliver's Travels* is as funny as a Lucianic parody; but it also has the excitement of a real traveller's tale, like the *Voyages* of Dampier, or of a realistic novel like *Robinson Crusoe*. Like Rabelais, Swift expresses through a light-hearted narrative much serious criticism of his contemporaries; but he also expresses certain profound